



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Old State House 150 Benefit Street Providence, RI 02903

Telephone 401-222-2678
TTY 401-222-3700

Fax 401-222-2968
www.preservation.ri.gov

MINUTES
RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
June 10, 2015

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Michael Abbott, AIA
Ms. Morgan Devlin
Mr. Mohamad Farzan, AIA
Ms. Caitlin Greeley, Statewide Planning, representing Kevin Flynn
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom, Chairman
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Pieter N. Roos
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Clark Schoettle

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Michaela Jergensen, Senior Reviewer RIDOT Projects
Ms. Katherine Jurczyk, Senior Grants Coordinator
Ms. Sarah Zurier, Principal Special Projects Coordinator

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Al Cocce, AIA, representing John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM
Mr. Darin Early, COO, Commerce RI
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
Ms. Ruth Taylor

GUESTS

Ms. Kim Smith Barnett

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 A.M., Mr. Hoogeboom, Chairman, presiding.

2. Minutes of May 13, 2015

On a motion by Mr. Abbott, seconded by Mr. Farzan, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the Minutes of May 13, 2015.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) The 2016 State Budget, which is nearing final passage, appears to provide level funding for the RIHPHC as requested. The 2016 Budget appears not to include new funding for State Historic Preservation Tax Credits; however, the Governor's request for a "Rebuild RI" program of tax credits and funding for new or historic development projects appears likely to be approved.

b) Vacant RIHPHC staff positions continue to be addressed. A Senior Historic Preservation Specialist has been selected, and he is expected to report in August. A second vacant Senior Historic Preservation Specialist position has been advertised; finalists from the first position will also be considered for the second position.

4. Loan Committee Report

a) Mr. Abbott reported that the Committee reviewed the request of the Providence Revolving Fund to renew the current loan agreement for \$750,000 for a term ending October 1, 2025. The funds are used for making rehabilitation loans to individual and private non-profit owners of residential properties in National Register Districts within the City of Providence. Over the life of the loans 1988 - 2014, PRF has used the RIHPHC loan funds for more than 40 historic rehabilitation projects with a combined loan value of \$3,400,057. The loan is secured by assets of PRF and interest-only is paid quarterly. Following discussion, on a motion by Mr. Abbott, seconded by Ms. Devlin, the Commission

VOTED to approve the loan renewal. All Commissioners voted in the affirmative, except Mr. Schoettle who did not participate in the discussion or the vote.

b) Mr. Schoettle reported on a loan application from Preserve Rhode Island for rehabilitation of the historic Chace Farmhouse owned by the Town of Lincoln on Great Road. The Loan Committee generally supports the proposed project, but has several questions regarding

- How the loan will be structured and how PRI intends to secure the loan pledging its own

assets.

- Whether the Town of Lincoln will grant a preservation easement or other assurance of preservation in the future.
- How PRI will manage and construct the project.
- Whether PRI might consider a larger project that would include reconstruction of historic exterior features.

During discussion, Commissioners encouraged the Loan Committee to follow up with PRI in order to bring a final proposal for approval to the July 8 meeting.

5. Approval of 2015 Rhody Awards for Historic Preservation

Sarah Zurier reported on the recommendations of the RIHPHC-Preserve Rhode Island staff reviewers. The awards will be presented at the annual Historic Preservation Celebration on Sunday September 27 at the historic Dunes Club, Narragansett.

VAROUJAN KARENTZ for Antoinette Downing Volunteer Service Award

A retired Raytheon Company executive, Varoujan Karentz sought out volunteer work that allowed him to use his experience in electronic and digital systems, contract negotiations, and project management. He joined the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association, volunteer stewards of the 1856 lighthouse. Since 2000, Varoujan has served as board member, vice president, docent, tour guide, grant writer, and project manager. One of his first projects was to develop a business plan, which led to a Master Plan that guides activity at the site. He has written/co-written proposals that have brought in more than \$560,000 worth of grants for capital projects, planning, repairs, and exhibits. He also became the chief interpreter at Beavertail, having published *Beavertail Light Station* and *The Life Savers: Rhode Island's Forgotten Service*, and authored many of the exhibits on site. As nominator Richard Sullivan wrote, "Keeping up with him is no easy task. The successes experienced by Beavertail Light Station. . .are largely due to his vision of what can be and willingness to oversee to completion a complex project with the many unanticipated issues that accompany such an undertaking."

SHEILA BRUSH for Frederick C. Williamson Professional Service Award

Sheila Brush is a professional preservationist who has been a voice for historic preservation in conversations about economic development and land use. She worked for many years at Providence Preservation Society and here at the Commission. In 1997, she organized RIHPHC's annual preservation conference "Growing Smart" that resulted in a statewide smart growth coalition, Grow Smart Rhode Island. Sheila secured funding for the fledgling organization and became Grow Smart's first staff person. For the last 18 years she has dedicated herself to coalition building and policy development to promote affordable housing and historic preservation tax credits. She created Grow Smart's award-winning Land Use Training Collaborative, which has developed and delivered workshops to more than 3,000 municipal officials and land-use practitioners.

PROVIDENCE CITY ARCHIVES for Community Award

For many years, the Providence City Archives was an underused, poorly organized but extremely valuable research facility in a leaky creaky space in the City Hall attic. Under the leadership of Paul Campbell, there has been a dramatic turnaround. To bring the facility up to date with current professional standards, staff has implemented new security measures, created a disaster plan, and supervised a citywide records management program. The archives has a robust new public presence, with exhibits, a Facebook page, a Flickr site, and a website, and public tours. Collection stewardship has improved, with the restoration of mayoral portraits, the recovery of lost items such as Providence's 1648 charter, accelerated preservation bookbinding and document conservation, and a major digitization project. This commitment to professionalization and public access results in attracting visitors, volunteers, interns, researchers, and funders.

RUMFORD LIBRARY-RITA DANIELLE STEELE for Homeowner Award

When she was eight, Rita Danielle Steele told her parents she would one day own a library. She wasn't kidding. Designed by Hilton and Jackson, the Rumford Library served the people of East Providence for over a century. Rita Danielle purchased the building, which had last been updated in the 1970s. Drawing on her expertise as a lawyer and realtor, she assembled a team that included her grandfather (an architect), her father (a stone mason), and many friends. They removed drop ceilings and carpet to find original finishes. They retained character-defining features like bookshelves, wood window sash, and fireplaces. The result is a unique historic home, an eight-year-old's dream.

Project Awards**JAMES HAZARD HOUSE, NEWPORT**

James Hazard built his house on the corner of Kay and Brinley streets between 1853 and 1865. In 1875, architect Dudley Newton was hired to install one of his patented roof designs on the house. In 1928, the house was carved into three apartments, which eventually increased to six. A 2012 fire caused by a cigarette butt caused extensive damage, leading the owner to put the building up for sale. Developer John Shea purchased the property and worked with architect Naomi Neville on the rehab project. Research by the Newport Historical Society inspired the design of a new wrap-around porch. Custom doors and windows were fabricated, and existing wood trim repaired; additional slates were patched in to match the historic roofing materials. The only remaining interior feature—a staircase—was restored. Upon completing the project, Shea sold the house to a new homeowner.

SLATER MILL, PAWTUCKET

Old Slater Mill Association recently completed a major exterior restoration project of the 1793-1835 mill building. Haynes de Boer Architecture + Preservation designed the project with was carried out by Martone Service Company. Activities included replacing the cedar shingle roof; repairing masonry; and restoring or replacing wood trim, doors, hoists, gates, and clapboards. All

80 sash windows and 55 monitor windows were restored. Finish analysis guided the complete repainting of the exterior.

BEAMAN & SMITH COMPANY MILL, PROVIDENCE

This property consists of two mill buildings at the corner of Gordon and Saratoga streets in South Providence: a two-story brick and iron building built in 1898 and a concrete slab-construction building built in 1917. Inside these buildings, workers made precision machine tools, then metal containers, and then maps and prints. Providence Community Health Centers purchased the property in 2003. Following substantial environmental cleanup, Vision 3 Architects and Structures North Consulting Engineers planned the rehab project. On the 1898 building, bricked in and boarded up window openings were uncovered; new windows installed to match the originals; metal columns repaired and replaced; and masonry restored. Brick, wood, and metal interior surfaces were restored. On the 1917 building, concrete was repaired; windows were replaced; and concrete/wood floors restored. The rehab attracted \$45 million funding from government, private, and philanthropic sources. It includes a new public health center for PCHC and medical offices.

PROVIDENCE g

Four underused buildings stood the southeast corner of Weybosset and Dorrance streets in downtown Providence: the 1924 Colonial Revival Providence Gas Company, the slender Italianate 1879 Teste Block, the 1980s addition to Providence Gas, and the 1923 Narragansett Garage. Providence Capital and Premier Land Development saw an opportunity to develop a major mixed-use rehab project using state and federal preservation tax credits. The complex now features 50 residential units, a 60-car garage, and three restaurant and retail spaces. Historic interior features—like the woodwork in the corporate offices—were restored; infilled windows were reopened; brick exteriors were repointed; brownstone trim stripped and repaired. Studio meja was the architect.

REUBEN SWEET HOUSE, PROVIDENCE

The Second Empire house was built ca. 1880 for Reuben Sweet in Elmwood. Providence Revolving Fund paid \$50,000 for this rundown beauty, acknowledging that it was “the worst house we’ve ever bought.” There were 11 rooming-house apartments—with termite-damaged sills; rotting, squirrel-infested cornices; outdated utilities; and lots of potential. The exterior rehab included rebuilding and reinforcing the granite stairs, replacing sills, replacing roofs and chimney, rebuilding the cornice; reinstalling porch balusters; replacing and repairing clapboards; and painting. The interior work included installing custom wood sash; replacing utilities; completing structural repairs; insulating; repairing and replacing wood trim; and installing new bathrooms and kitchens. Once the landscaping and sitework was complete, PRF sold the house to a homeowner below 100% area median income and the rental unit was reserved for tenants at or below 50% AMI—the owner’s parents. Home Sweet Home.

ARNOLD LUMBER, SOUTH KINGSTOWN

In 1892, J.C. Tucker Company opened the Wakefield Branch of their hardware and building supply company on Main Street. The Branch was not just a store but a social center for local farmers, builders, and neighbors. Some years later, some lumber enthusiasts decided to put a new storefront on the building. They removed the cornice, covered the second story and added a decorative roof for fun. Arnold Lumber launched a façade restoration project. Working with Sweenor Builders, they uncovered the original brick façade, repointed and repaired the brick, installed new windows, and recreated the proud cornice.

AUDRAIN BUILDING, NEWPORT

Architect Bruce Price designed this building, erected in 1902-03 for Adolphe Audrain on Bellevue Avenue. It is the part of a prominent stretch of commercial buildings that includes the Travers Block, Newport Casino, and King Block. The Audrain Building is built of red brick with brightly colored terra cotta Florentine Renaissance ornament. For many years, it housed offices and shops—and perhaps a Mercedes/Chevrolet dealership. It was purchased by Nicholas Schorsch who hired Northeast Collaborative Architects to convert the building into a first-floor museum of restored historic automobiles and Schorsch's corporate offices on the 2nd floor. On the exterior, terracotta storefronts were restored, wood repaired, and brick repointed. The elaborate terracotta balustrade with lion figures was reproduced based on historic images. Alterations to the building included continuing the balustrade the full length of the south elevation beyond where it originally existed. Other alterations included the insertion of a 2-story window and several small windows at the back of the south elevation. Bearing walls throughout the building interior were removed, and a new structural system installed—including large lattice girders.

During discussion of the awards, Commissioners focused on the Audrain Building project. All felt the restored exterior was well-done and had a large impact on historic Bellevue Avenue. Dr. Malone noted that architect Bruce Price is recognized for his Shingle Style cottages at Tuxedo Park, NY and commissions for a wide range of important buildings. Mr. Roos stated that the interior alterations to the building are not highly visible during daylight hours. Dr. Onorato considered the changes to be part of an adaptive reuse of the building. Mr. Schoettle emphasized that this was a private project that restored significant exterior historic features but was not required to follow the federal standards when renovating the interior for new uses. On a motion by Mr. Schoettle, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission

VOTED unanimously to approve the 2015 Rhody Awards as presented.

6. Report: State Preservation Grants Program

Sarah Zurier and Katy Jurczyk reported on the SPG program and regulations. In January 2015, the Commissioners were briefed on updated regulations to implement the SPG program approved in the 2014 Bond Issue. Since January, previous SPG project files have been reviewed,

and revised SPG regulations call for a new maximum grant amount of \$150,000; and require applicants to complete previous grants in order to be eligible to apply for new grants. Likewise, the nine “named projects” in the Bond Issue could apply for State Preservation Grants after completing their initial projects.

Information sessions were held for potential SPG applicants during the Statewide Preservation Conference on April 25 and at The Old State House on June 3. Notice of the amended SPG regulations was posted on May 11, and information about the 2015 SPG Program was distributed widely by a special email and information was posted on the RIHPHC website. A public hearing on the amended regulations is scheduled for June 12. The regulations will be presented to RIHPHC Commissioners for final approval at the July 8, 2015 meeting.

Following past practice, a list of SPG grant reviewers has been assembled for the Commission’s approval. The role of the SPG grant reviewers is to conduct detailed review and evaluation of all the applications that are received. The list includes Commissioner Onorato to represent the Commissioners, Executive Director Sanderson to represent staff review, and RISCA Executive Director Randy Rosenbaum for coordination with the State Cultural Facilities Grants Program. SPG grant reviewers also represent various geographical regions of the state and specialized areas of historic preservation expertise.

In 2015, grant applications will be due on August 14 and will receive initial review by RIHPHC staff. The SPG grant reviewers will read applications and will meet on October 7 to discuss their evaluations. Review will continue with staff follow up as requested by the review panel. On December 2 the review panel will meet a second time and will recommend a list of grant projects for review and approval by the RIHPHC Commissioners at the December 9 RIHPHC Commission meeting.

The suggested list of 2015 SPG grant reviewers is:

1. Rob Cagnetta, Founder, Heritage Restoration, Inc. (South Kingstown)
2. Charlene Perkins Cutler, Executive Director, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, Inc. (Blackstone Valley)
3. Fred Faria, President, Hope Historical Association (Scituate)
4. Karen Jessup, Architectural & Landscape Historian (Providence)
5. Ronald Onorato, Honors Professor of Art History, University of Rhode Island (Newport, South Kingstown)

6. Randall Rosenbaum, Executive Director, R.I. State Council on the Arts (Cumberland, statewide)
7. Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director, RIHPHC (Providence, statewide)
8. Val Talmage, Executive Director, Preserve Rhode Island (Cranston, statewide)
9. Caroline Wells, Town Planner, Town of Warren (Warren)

On a motion by Mr. Farzan, seconded by Dr. Malone, the Commission

VOTED unanimously to appoint the 2015 SPG grant reviewers as recommended.

7. Other Business: There was no other business.
8. Next regular meeting date: Wednesday July 8, 2015 at 9:30 AM.
9. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:15 AM.

Minutes recorded by,



Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer